

**RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
MAIN COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Clinical Social Work: Mental Health
Course: 19:910:517 – OL**

Term:
Instructor:
Email:
Office:
Office Hours:

I. Catalog Course Description

Contemporary interventions with adults and adolescents with severe psychiatric disorders and their families, primarily in community settings. Topics include: experience of and effects of serious mental illness on individuals and families; current approaches to treatment and rehabilitation; intervention techniques with the more severe and chronic forms of psychiatric disorder as defined in DSM 5; psychotropic medications; case management and housing approaches.

II. Course Overview

This course is designed to prepare students for working with adults with serious mental illness (SMI) in institutional and community settings. It begins by setting a context for contemporary mental health care delivery by describing our current understanding of SMI—both from the objective perspective of the field and from the subjective perspective of persons and their families struggling with SMI. After describing major models of community-based services and the policy environment that shapes them, the course turns its attention to the central tasks of relationship development, ethical decision-making, assessment of client needs and strengths, and treatment planning. The second half of the course focuses on specific types of intervention, such as skills training, vocational rehabilitation, and medication management. Additionally, the course attends to the needs of persons with SMI who also struggle with problematic substance use and/or trauma histories and examine perspectives of and interventions for families of persons with SMI. Throughout the course, relevant theoretical orientations will be used to examine problems, issues, and interventions, and attention will be paid to maximizing treatment collaboration and client self-determination as well as working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

As students read through this syllabus, they should also remember to closely review the School-Wide Syllabus in Canvas or the Student Handbook to find information on the School of Social Work mission statement and learning goals, school-wide policies (including academic integrity policies and the standardized attendance policy), and student resources and supports.

III. Place of Course In Program

This is an elective in the Advanced Year program. Enrollment in Advanced Direct Practice I (19:910:511) is a pre- or co-requisite. Students will have successfully completed the

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Professional Foundation year as prerequisite. A psychopathology (Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis) course is also recommended as a prerequisite.

IV. Council of Social Work Education's Social Work Competencies

The MSW Program at Rutgers is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE's accreditation standards can be reviewed at www.cswe.org

In keeping with CSWE standards, the Rutgers School of Social Work has integrated the 2022 CSWE competencies within its curriculum. The competencies assessed in this course include:

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities. Clinical social work practitioners recognize the importance of the engagement process and understand the importance of differential use of self in initial encounters. Practitioners in clinical social work rely on ecological, anti-racist, human rights, and anti-oppressive perspectives to inform the therapeutic relationship; are aware of how interpersonal dynamics and cultural factors shape the therapeutic relationship; and use relational techniques to develop a therapeutic relationship. Clinical social workers recognize how engagement with couples, families, and groups may differ from individual approaches, and they develop differential engagement skills accordingly. Clinical social workers value collaboration and thus recognize the importance of clients' input in the development of their treatment goals. Clinical social workers use the engagement process to help clients convey their thoughts and concerns within the therapeutic relationship as well as to other providers/stakeholders. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and social problems (poverty, crime, social injustice, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, migration status, and ableism, among others) and incorporate this understanding of, and reflect upon, the ways these aspects shape client engagement.
- Understand how members of oppressed groups—people of color, people with varying sexual orientation and gender identities, people with different abilities, people with severe and persistent mental illness, among others—may require methods of engagement rooted in anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and human rights perspectives .
- Identify ways to enhance collaboration with clients and promote their empowerment, including seeking their input and feedback regarding the treatment process and fostering their capacity to provide feedback to other members of the treatment team.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Clinical social workers understand the importance of the assessment process and recognize that it is ongoing and directly informs their interventions. Clinical social workers value holistic assessment and therefore use the bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment process as well as analysis of clients' strengths and resiliencies, their coping skills, and their adaptation to traumatic and stressful life events in a full assessment. Practitioners of clinical social work understand how their personal experiences may impact the assessment process. Clinical social workers recognize the power of intergenerational family patterns on individuals and explain these to clients while avoiding deterministic approaches to identifying such patterns. Clinical social workers also recognize that traumatic and stressful events can be precipitated by human rights violations,

racism, and other forms of oppression. When applicable, clinical social workers rely on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* to enhance their assessment, to conduct differential diagnosis, and to communicate with other healthcare providers about clients' presenting problems and symptomatology. Clinical social workers elicit client feedback about their experience of the assessment process, reflect upon varied meanings of the assessment, and share these assessment outcomes with clients. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and social problems— poverty, community violence, racism, sexism, religious or ideological bias, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other social injustices—and incorporate this understanding into their assessments.
- Select, modify, adapt, and evaluate clinical assessment tools and approaches depending on the needs and social locations of clients and current empirical evidence.
- Assess how issues of racism and other forms of oppression, social injustice, and inequities in access to resources play a role in client difficulties and how they affect the assessment process, including assisting the client in voicing concerns to the entire treatment team.
- Consider sharing the ways trauma and other stressors (including those related to racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression) affect health and behavior in order to assist colleagues in promoting empathy for clients in regard to the assessed factors, especially in host settings (e.g., health, criminal justice, and educational environments).
- Reflect on their own issues of power and privilege and how they impact the therapeutic relationship.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities. Clinical social workers select effective modalities for intervention based on the existing research as well as the client's cultural background and experiences with racism and other forms of oppression. Clinical social work practitioners integrate their knowledge of various individual, family, and group psychotherapeutic modalities, as well as crisis intervention techniques, to intervene effectively; demonstrate flexibility by tailoring interventions to suit the needs of multiple client populations; and understand the effects of the social environment on client well-being. Clinical social workers therefore recognize the need to also intervene on mezzo and macro levels. Practitioners in clinical social work critically select, apply, and evaluate best practices and evidence-informed interventions; they value collaboration with the client and other professionals to coordinate treatment plans. Clinical social workers maintain knowledge of the communities they serve in order to ensure that clients are connected with relevant services and resources in an effective manner, while eliciting client feedback about how the interventions are impacting the client. Practitioners in clinical social work:

- Select psychotherapeutic interventions based on a critical knowledge of theory, research, practice experience, and on understanding of how human rights violations, racism, and other types of oppression impact client choice of, and access to, interventions.
- Exhibit flexibility by shifting perspectives and interventions to suit the needs of clients, while recognizing that the multi-faceted assessment drives the selection of appropriate interventions.

- Demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties and social problems— poverty, crime, social inequality, institutional racism, sexism, religious and/or ideological bias, homophobia, and transphobia—and incorporate this understanding into their interventions.
- Intervene effectively with individuals, families, and groups, while eliciting client feedback and knowing when to modify approaches.

[View the entire set of 2022 CSWE competencies.](#)

V. Course Objectives

This course will enable students to:

1. Recognize the ways in which biological, psychological, and social factors can impact the functioning and outcomes of people with serious mental illness
2. Demonstrate the ability to formulate a person-centered assessment and treatment plan that incorporates a person’s own goals, needs, and strengths.
3. Evaluate and select appropriate intervention modalities based on empirical evidence, cultural relevance, availability of resources, and person-centered assessment.
4. Apply intervention modalities for people with serious mental illness.
5. Understand ethical issues involved in intervention.

VI. Required Texts and Readings

Before purchasing the required text below, please ensure that you have selected the correct edition/year.

Corrigan, P.W. (2016, 2nd edition) *Principles and Practice of Psychiatric Rehabilitation: An Empirical Approach*. New York: Guilford. [Abbreviated henceforth as “CORRIGAN”]

[The required film “Out of the Shadow” is available for free](#) through Rutgers Streaming Media Service and posted in Canvas. **Note:** The case featured in this film is the case you will use in the final paper, so it would be worthwhile to review the assignment and take notes while viewing the film.

Students also are expected to read other works drawn from a selection of additional books and journals.

Other required readings (separate from textbook) are available through the Rutgers University Library “Reading List” that is integrated into your Canvas course. To find your readings:

Click on the “Reading List” tab in the Canvas navigation bar to the left-hand side of the course. Please note, this list contains links to articles and other required readings separate from the textbook (if applicable). Please follow the syllabus and/or Canvas Readings and

Resources page in each module for more specific required readings and resources for each week (including textbook/media).

For further instructions [please click here for a video tutorial](#)

VII. Attendance and Participation

Attendance

Please refer to the school-wide syllabus for the standard attendance policy for classes in on-the-ground (traditional) program, intensive weekend program (IWP), and asynchronous online program.

Students are expected to read all course-related emails sent to their Rutgers email account and course announcements/messages posted in Canvas to stay informed of any changes in the course schedule, readings, or assignments.

Late Assignments

For the sake of consistency and in fairness to all students, assignment deadlines are firm. If an assignment due date conflicts with a religious observance, please inform the instructor prior to the assignment's due date. If you are unclear about any part of an assignment, please discuss this with the instructor well before the assignment is due to ensure an on-time submission.

Late submissions will not be accepted for major assignments (Written Assignments/Group Presentation/Person-Centered Assessment and Treatment Plan) unless the accommodation has been approved by Office of Disability Services *or* the instructor in conjunction with Student Services has determined that there is an extenuating circumstance. Before requesting an extension, you must meet with your advisor to discuss the extenuating circumstance so they can provide additional support if needed and have them notify the instructor of the situation.

Late discussion posts/replies will only be graded if they are submitted before 11:59pm on Mondays. Posts submitted late will have one point taken off for the late submission.

VIII. Assignments and Grading

All written assignments **must** follow APA format. The professor reserves the right to reduce the letter grade for any assignment that does not conform to APA format.

Assignments

Your final grade will be based on your Participation, several Written Assignments, a Group Presentation, and a Final Paper. Participation includes student introductions and discussion posts/replies.

Grade Breakdown

The grade breakdown in terms of point value and percentage of the final grade accorded to each

assignment are shown in the following table.

Grade Breakdown		
Assignment	Point Value	Percentage of Final Grade
Participation Student Introduction, Discussion posts/replies	4 points each	25%
Written Assignments/Journal	100 points each	25%
Group Presentation		
Group Presentation Prep	5 points	5%
Group Presentation	100 points	20%
Final Paper	30 points	25%

IX. COURSE OUTLINE

Schedule of Topics and Readings can be found on Canvas.